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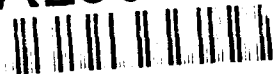
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THE ECUADOREAN ARMY, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 90s

BY

Lieutenant Colonel Luis B. Hernandez  
Ecuadorean Army

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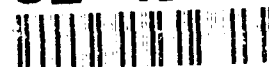
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SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE. DISTRIBUTION IS UNLIMITED.		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION US ARMY WAR COLLEGE		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) AWCAB	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) ROOT HALL, BUILDING 122 CARLISLE, PA 17013-5050			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
			WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.		
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) THE ECUADOREAN ARMY, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 90s.					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) LUIS B. HERNANDEZ, LT COL, ECUADOREAN ARMY					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Individual Study Project		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 1992 MARCH 26	
				15. PAGE COUNT 43	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP			
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)  Ecuador's Political Constitution assigns two missions to the Armed Forces: the country's internal and external security, and support in the country's development. The Ecuadorean Army has taken an active part in fulfilling these two missions which form part of national security strategy. This paper explains the way in which the Army helps in the socioeconomic progress of Ecuador through its support for education, agriculture, health care and its participation in industry. It analyzes both internal and external threats to national security which include destruction of the environment, the transit of drugs through the country, and the boundary dispute with Peru. It also analyzes future trends during the 90s.					
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL DR GABRIEL MARCELLA			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 717/245-3207		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL AWCAB

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**THE ECUADOREAN ARMY, SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE 90s  
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

by

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# ABSTRACT

**AUTHOR:** Luis B. Hernandez, Lt Col, Ecuadorean Army

**TITLE:** The Ecuadorean Army, Security and Development in the 90s.

**FORMAT:** Individual Study Project

**DATE:** 26 March 1992 **PAGES:** 43 **CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

Ecuador's Political Constitution assigns two missions to the Armed Forces: the country's internal and external security, and support in the country's development. The Ecuadorean Army has taken an active part in fulfilling these two missions which form part of national security strategy. This paper explains the way in which the Army helps in the socioeconomic progress of Ecuador through its support for education, agriculture, health care and its participation in industry. It analyzes both internal and external threats to national security which include destruction of the environment, the transit of drugs through the country, and the boundary dispute with Peru. It also analyzes future trends during the 90s.

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Our security is not a matter of weapons alone. The arm that wields them must be strong, the eye that guides them clear, the will that directs them indomitable.

Franklin D. Roosevelt.  
Message to Congress, May 16, 1940

## INTRODUCTION

The very existence of an army is based upon its national defense role. Therefore its activities should be directed almost entirely towards training, readiness, and strengthening programs to enable it to fulfill those missions assigned to it by the Constitution. This does not mean that it is heresy to believe that armies in developing countries, particularly in Latin America, should take an active part in support of their development.

Almost since its origins, the Ecuadorean Army has taken an active role in the economic and social development of the country. Historically, the Army has been the first governmental institution to occupy the remoter parts of the country in fulfilling its task of protecting national sovereignty. During this occupation the Army brought security and development to these areas.

It is precisely all these contributions made by the Army towards the progress of the nation which are combined to form the role assigned to it by the Constitution. Article 128 states:

The Public Forces are appointed to preserve the national sovereignty, to defend the integrity and independence of the republic, and to guarantee its legal order. Without lessening its fundamental mission, the law shall determine to what extent the Public Forces must lend their cooperation in the economic and social development of the country and in other matters concerning national security.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with the Policy of National Security, the Armed Forces are responsible for protecting the nation from both internal and external threats. In peacetime, their tasks are also directed towards the development of the country.

The Army's support of development has been applauded, but also criticized, by some sectors of Ecuadorean society. The US Embassy has associated itself with the line of thinking against army participation in non-military tasks, especially in industrial activity. However, there are more voices in support of the Army's past and present propensity not to shut itself up in its barracks whilst its remaining countrymen suffer from lack of education, health care, and other matters.

This paper examines the Army's participation in Ecuador's development and projects this role through the 90s. It will discuss support for education, agriculture, industry, medical

care, the fight against drugs, and environmental protection. It also examines the Army's traditional mission of defending the nation against external and internal threats.

## BACKGROUND

Ecuador is situated in the northwest sector of South America and despite being one of the smaller countries in the region, its geographical diversity includes jungle, mountains and coastline. The country's total area is 283,560 km<sup>2</sup>, including the Galapagos Islands. This is an area slightly smaller than the state of Nevada. Two sections of the border with Peru are in dispute.

Ecuador has a population of 10,751,648 (July 1991) with a growth rate of 2.3%. The ethnic divisions consist of 55% mestizo (a mixture between Indian and Spanish); 25% Indian; 10% Spanish; and 10% Black.

The country's official name is "The Republic of Ecuador." The government is composed of three branches: the executive branch consisting of the president, the vice president and the cabinet, the legislative branch consisting of the National Congress (Congreso Nacional), and the judicial branch consisting of the Supreme Court (Corte Suprema).<sup>2</sup>



The Ecuadorean economy is dependent upon oil exports (47%). Other important exports include coffee, cacao, bananas, shrimps, and fish products. The GDP is US\$9.7 billion and the per capita US\$920.

Ecuador has one of the highest external debts in South America in relation to its GDP. The total debt amounts to US\$11.8 billion. The defense expenditures amount to US\$176 million, 1.6% of GDP (1990 estimate).

#### NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The Law on National Security was published for the first time on 20 July 1979 during the government of a military dictatorship.<sup>3</sup>

The Law on National Security has opened the way for the drafting of the National Security Strategy. This Strategy, in spite of being termed the Policy on National Security, is not a document officially issued by the government. Nevertheless, it is normally referred to indirectly in the "Government Plan" each time a new president takes office.

Since 1979 the democratic governments in Ecuador have endorsed the participation of the Armed Forces in development of

the country. In their inaugural addresses, the three presidents have referred to the Armed Forces in the following terms:

President Jaime Roldos: Ecuador now has a new capacity for achieving its development and security. It has a new national power which is the fruit of the merging of the political, economic, psychological and military power and means, harmoniously directed toward the achievement of a common goal - the progress of the nation and the well being of all Ecuadoreans.<sup>4</sup>

President León Febres Cordero: The Ecuadorean Armed Forces, whose historic constitutional role will be promoted and encouraged, have a momentous mission to fulfill in this grave hour of national reconstruction in which all of the country's valuable citizens must feel committed to the challenge that we have imposed on ourselves. The Armed Forces will continue to honor their pledges, strengthened and supported by devotion, discipline and heroism.<sup>5</sup>

President Rodrigo Boria: In the modern state, particularly in times of crisis as the ones we are enduring, the Armed Forces, in addition to their strictly military duties, should contribute to the country's social and economic development. However, national security - namely, the security of the state - cannot be construed apart from the strength of the four (as heard) elements that comprise it: territory, people, the country, political power, and sovereignty. A state cannot be strong if the elements that comprise it are not. One cannot speak of National Security if its elements are weak.<sup>6</sup>

In Ecuador, the Policy on National Security consists of two areas of action, Security and Development, which are directed towards achieving the well being and security of the Ecuadorean nation. Given that National Security and Economic Development are indivisible,<sup>7</sup> Ecuador has given the Armed Forces a dual role: to provide security against internal and external threats and to cooperate in development, since economic strength and social well

being are a nation's best weapons against threats to its security.

In peace time, the Military Strategy deriving from the Policy on National Security assigns the Armed Forces tasks directed at supporting the social and economic development of Ecuador. These tasks are performed at brigade and battalion level in their respective areas of jurisdiction. The following are the main activities in which the Armed Forces are engaged in accordance with the Policy on National Security.

#### SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

Each Army brigade has a school within its area of jurisdiction which serves the needs of Army families as well as civilian personnel living in the area. In those sectors distant from urban centers, the Army makes available teaching staff and instructional material for the functioning of the school. In the majority of cases, this support is covered by funds assigned to the military units for operational purposes; that is to say, from the budget destined for training.

To give an example of the kind of support to education given by the Army, the Armored Cavalry Brigade No. 11, "Galapagos," with its headquarters in Riobamba, the capital of the province with the largest Indian population in Ecuador, sends out military

personnel to the communities situated in the Andean mountains to provide education for the Indians. Since the military personnel are accustomed to the long and arduous marches involved, it presents no obstacle to set out towards these cold and desolate areas to provide education. The journalist Galo Escudero Cevallos, in an article entitled "Patriotic task of the 'Galapagos' Brigade" states:

It is difficult to describe in a journalist commentary the work carried out in the sectors of health (especially in the prevention of cholera), education, organization, transportation, commerce, agriculture, handicraft, forestry etc; and I would suggest to those people from the education unions that they plan a visit in order to see with their own eyes the realities that they may conclude there is no reason for the criticism against the work which they implement.<sup>8</sup>

Military service is a long lasting way in which to contribute towards improving education, and consequently towards development. Each year approximately 20,000 citizens come forward to comply with this requirement and return to civilian life, after one year's service, with new knowledge on mechanics, carpentry, first aid, etc. When a certain proportion of conscripts belong to a sector of the population with a low level of education, the work carried out in the barracks by these people is almost totally directed towards improving their level of literacy, very often to the detriment of their military training.

Significant support towards higher education is given by the Army through the Army Polytechnic School where more than 90% of the students are civilians. At the moment there are approximately 10,000 students in the following areas of study: Business Administration, Civil Engineering, Cartography, Electrical Engineering, Educational Sciences, Physical Education, Languages, and Data Processing.

#### SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE

In 1972 the Army established Agrarian Conscription. This program allowed the rural population of conscription age to comply with military service obligations in military units where they could improve their agricultural knowledge. In the end, two objectives were gained: first, the population learned modern techniques on how to cultivate the land; second, migration to the cities was reduced, thus minimizing the increase in urban misery. This type of conscription motivates erstwhile soldiers to return to the rural districts. At present, the Army helps the rural communities, especially the Indian populations, to market their products by providing free transport from the fields of cultivation to the market centers in the cities. This type of cooperation in the city of Riobamba is reported in the following manner by the newspaper El Comercio, which has the largest circulation in Quito:

For example, on Saturday, which is market day in this locality, the Indians arrive at about seven in the morning in vehicles which have been provided by the military; they are provided with breakfast at the brigade and then go out to sell their produce. They return for lunch and wait to return to their homes from four in the afternoon in a car, again provided by the Army.<sup>9</sup>

There is a continuous call for greater participation on the part of the Army in the area of agriculture, particularly in relation to forestry. The level of deforestation in Ecuador is an increasing cause for concern and is considered to be one of the highest in South America in relation to the size of its territory. The journalist Enrique Echeverria G., recommended in his editorial published in the newspaper El Comercio that Congress create a law to establish Forestry Conscription which would allow students and the military to reforest the country in a way which was done twenty years ago.<sup>10</sup>

In order to accomplish its own mission, the Army has access to extensive training areas which have been largely cultivated and in this way has made a significant contribution towards production. That is to say that the Army does not own unproductive land, but on the contrary has made and is making the best use of the land under its control.

SUPPORT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

This is one of the areas where the Army has given support almost since the very beginning. The fact that at battalion level the Army can count on health facilities, in particular a doctor, a dentist, and a dozen nurses, has allowed health service to be extended to sections of the population especially in the rural areas. In areas far removed from urban centers where military units are located, it is the Army which almost exclusively attends to the health needs of the inhabitants. Normally 50% of a battalion's medical facility time is devoted to free medical attention to the civilian population, as, for example, in the jungle units. This service will include the costs for the transport and evacuation of patients.

The Army's help in support of public health in the Ecuadorean jungle is critical. During the preventive medicine and vaccination campaigns initiated by the Ministry of Health, the Army is called upon to provide transport in the form of helicopters and water craft, as well as the medical staff, doctors, and nurses. Normally 20,000 children take part in these campaigns.

The Army has always observed and put into practice a philosophy that, in providing material and human resources to its military units in rural areas, it has taken into account the needs of the civilian population in the area. At present, the Army is building a hospital in the Napo Province with a capacity

of 32 beds. This capacity greatly exceeds the requirements of the military population of the area. As in other military health centers, 40% of the hospital capacity can be used for the needs of the civilian population. It is important to mention that it is perhaps only through the Army that inhabitants of the more remote areas are able to have access to medical specialists, not only general medical care. This is made possible due to Army regulations which require all military personnel, including doctors, to serve on frontier posts or in units far from urban centers, e.g., in the Amazon jungle.

Conscription itself makes a real contribution to the level of public health in Ecuador. All citizens who join the Army for military service are given a medical examination upon admittance which determines their state of health and ultimately improves it at no personal cost. It is often through these medical examinations that chronic illnesses in the younger generation of Ecuadoreans are discovered. These are then attended to by the military health services. "If I had not joined the Army, I should never have known that I suffered from myopia" said one young Ecuadorean when he had finished his military service and was returning home with eye glasses provided by the battalion in which he had served. Comments such as these are common and frequent from those citizens who have undertaken their military service and who in the majority of cases come from sectors of society with scarce economic resources.



The cholera epidemic which affected around 200,000 people in Peru,<sup>11</sup> also had repercussions in Ecuador, especially in Guayaquil and in the Chimborazo province. Army cooperation was immediate. Jointly with the Ministry of Health, the Army established medical centers in those areas affected, an action which helped to control this terrible epidemic.<sup>12</sup>

In order to carry out its basic function, the Army has field hospitals available in times of peace, together with a team of doctors and specialists. These are deployed every six months to a remote area of the country for one week in order to attend to the medical needs of the population in that area. In Quito the Army usually goes to the lower income districts in order to provide preventive medicine, odontology, laboratory tests, and free medicines. The soldier is truly a servant of the people.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE ARMY'S ROLE IN THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF THE COUNTRY

At the height of the cold war between the United States and the old Soviet Union, one of the objectives of communist parties was to weaken and then destroy the armed forces in some of the Latin American countries. The aim was to encourage armed fights to install totalitarian governments. It was common to denigrate the armed forces through various negative commentaries, one of which was that the armed forces are an institution which consumes and does not produce. At present these comments even form part

of a political campaign on behalf of a presidential candidate with the object of gaining votes by demagogic and populist means.

The armed forces provide historical continuity to a nation. They are the symbol of nationality and sovereignty.<sup>14</sup> Their output is not measured in economic terms but by the manner in which they play their role in providing security for the country. We could draw a very simple analogy by asking whether the wall or the fence built by an industrial complex or farm produces gains for the owners? The answer would likely be: certainly not! But, on the other hand, it allows them to produce in an atmosphere of peace and protection against the dangers which may threaten from outside.

In his State of the Union speech in January 1992, the President of the United States referred to the possibility of fewer conflicts in the world, yet announced his decision against major reductions in the armed forces, noting that the world is still a dangerous place: only the dead have seen the end of conflict. And though yesterday's challenges are behind us, tomorrow's are being born.<sup>15</sup>

The Ecuadorean Army is sensitive to the burden of military expenditures when the country is confronted by numerous social needs. The Army tries to minimize defense costs to subsidize its active role in civic development. Army assistance with

development of the country is specified in the Constitution and is in keeping with the wishes of the majority of the Ecuadorean people.

The article "Whither the Latin American Military?" written by Gabriel Marcella<sup>16</sup> and published in the journal North-South in August 1991 argues that one of the future missions of the Latin American armed forces is to collaborate in their respective countries in the development of areas where it is difficult for the civilians to do so. This type of mission was developed by the Ecuadorean Army through the Corps of Engineers over forty years ago, especially in the construction and maintenance of roads in the Amazon region.

With creation of the Dirección de Industrias del Ejercito (DINE) in 1973, the Army participated in a more active way in the industrialization of the country. The aims and objectives laid down in the DINE's Articles provide for the following:

1. Promote the industrial development of the country.
2. Produce armament, equipment, materials and supplies for defense, promoting self sufficiency for the armed forces.
3. Explore and exploit mineral deposits.

4. Provide raw materials.
5. Establish its own companies, constitute and form part of mixed economy companies.
6. Together with the Ministry of Industry take part in regulating the external commerce of metals, alloys and combinations.<sup>17</sup>

In its seventeen years of existence, DINE has established two of its own companies and has participated as a shareholder in eighteen other companies with Ecuadorean and foreign investors. These companies employ directly more than five thousand people, and indirectly another ten thousand people, thus generating welfare for sixty thousand people.<sup>18</sup>

The social and economic activities of the Army do not interfere in any way with their principal mission, that of National Defense. On the contrary, they complement it since they allow the country to optimize the use of all the elements of national power, including the military, in order to achieve economic development which is the base for National Security. No more than five officers in the rank of colonel are employed in the management of the companies belonging to DINE. The administrative staff and work force are civilians.

The following diagram shows the group of companies which make up DINE, as well as the share holding structure of these companies:

COMPANY/ACTIVITY	CAPITAL*	DINE	PRIVATE
1. Military Fabrication Personnel equipment	425.40	100%	
2. Santa Barbara. Ammunition factory	472.00	100%	
3. Steel of Ecuador - steel production	1,800.00	54.49%	45.51%
4. National Metal Casting	650.00	54.34%	45.66%
5. Military equipment	240.00	94.03%	5.97%
6. Explosives factory	600.00	60%	40%
7. Footwear Production	200.00	99.75%	0.25%
8. Electro-mechanic production	600.00	51%	49%
9. Leather processing	4.00	99%	1%
10. Car assembly plant	2,400.00	34.10%	65.90%
11. Metal products	1,000.00	10.40%	89.60%
12. Copper products	770.00	10.96%	89.04%
13. Engine assembly plant	375.00	2.54%	97.46%
14. Bus assembly plant	400.00	1.98%	98.02%
15. Mining Company	74.00	93.24%	6.75%
16. Mining Services	10.00	90%	10%
17. Agro industries	10.00	49%	51%

\*Expressed in millions of sucres. US\$1 = 900 sucres.

## ANALYSIS OF THE ARMY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF THE COUNTRY

In one of his interviews with the press, President Oswaldo Hurtado<sup>19</sup> commented upon the persistently negative attitudes from certain sectors of the political opposition towards the measures taken by the government to solve some of the country's problems. "You are damned if you do and you are damned if you don't" the disappointed president would say when he referred to the opposition's criticisms. This type of attitude and negative criticism has been directed towards the Army by some individuals due to its participation in what the Constitution has laid down and what the majority of Ecuadoreans agree to. In a speech given by the Director of DINE on the occasion of an anniversary of its founding and at which the President of the Republic was present, he expressed the following lament regarding

...the soldier who watches day by day the national and the civic consciences slowly diminish because of various phenomena, that the interests of a few are imposed even though they may be prejudicial to the rest; that many unscrupulous individuals, who cannot call themselves Ecuadoreans, break the laws with the only object of disproportionate self enrichment, even though to achieve this means confronting their fellow countrymen or the use of ignoble arms in the search for personal gain, that in some sectors moral principles which dignify the human being have become a secondary consideration and it is only a fight to reach two rungs higher in order to look with disdain upon the rest.<sup>20</sup>

The complaints from those who oppose the Army's participation in the industrialization of the country have also reached the doors of the American Embassy, on the dubious assumption that the dignity of a country such as the United States could lend itself to support groups interested only in their own gain. Unfortunately and with a regrettable attitude ex-Ambassador Richard N. Holwill referred to DINE's participation in the country's development in the following terms: "It is difficult to do business with someone holding a rifle."<sup>21</sup> These comments were not accepted by the Army leadership who considered them inopportune.

On the occasion of the visit of a group from the US Army War College, the United States Embassy prepared a conference on Ecuador.<sup>22</sup> When mention was made of the Army's participation in industrialization, the comments were diverse and contradictory, expressing on the one hand that Army participation created uncertainty in the private sector and in the long term was prejudicial to the Army, and on the other hand that those companies managed by the Army had been the most successful and that there was no corruption within the military. If the first comment is correct, the Political Constitution of Ecuador would have to be modified to deny the role which the majority of the Ecuadorean people would like to see the armed forces play in times of peace. The Embassy point of view seems to be premised on the assumption that DINE participation in the

industrialization of the country is a form of government participation. Nevertheless, as is indicated in the previous diagram, DINE has private internal and external investors.

Dr. Luis Eladio Proaño, adviser to the Army Department of Information and Information Secretary to the Government of Dr. Rodrigo Borja in 1990, expressed the following view in an article entitled "The soldier in the Ecuador of Today": "The Armed Forces are trying to discern what their role will be in circumstances where frustration and despair over the possibility of development have left the politicians with the plague of doubt, anxiety and distrust."<sup>23</sup>

In the event of economic deterioration increasing in Latin America over the present decade, armed forces' participation in support of development will be received sympathetically, especially in those populist sectors which are the most affected by poverty.<sup>24</sup> Doctor Proaño emphasizes that one of the tasks in the future for the Army will be: "to carry forward community development work in zones which are impoverished and traditionally abandoned and those which the state bureaucracy does not attend to nor will attend to out of chronic lack of interest and because of the sacrifice which this entails."<sup>25</sup> It seems likely that governments will give more support in the future to the Army's social work, especially when the costs and



the efficiency of the work done by the government bureaucracy are unfavorably compared with those of the armed forces.<sup>26</sup>

The Army's participation in the industrialization of the country has received positive comments from the Ecuadorean press. Its participation in areas such as the manufacture of explosives has achieved self sufficiency for the national market with the consequent saving in foreign currency which is so scarce in developing countries.<sup>27</sup>

In the future the Army will surely have a more active role in promoting the country's industrial development with the formation of mixed companies, with private capital coming both from inside the country and from outside, especially with regard to the mining sector.<sup>28</sup>

Civil investors will have the opportunity to continue taking part in DINE which has a good reputation for efficiency. This is an indication that the Army has no wish to monopolize this type of economic activity.

Despite the fact that one of the aims of the Army's participation in industry is to try to achieve economic self sufficiency, it will be difficult to achieve in the short term. Yet the Army's economic role constitutes a large step in relieving poverty in the country since the resources destined for

the armed forces, and which are necessary for the security of the country, could be used in the budgets for health, education, infrastructure construction, etc.<sup>29</sup>

In the industrialized countries, the existence of the armed forces provides significant support for the economy and for industrial and technological development of these countries. The "military- industrial complex" of the United States generated approximately 7 million jobs during the 70s<sup>30</sup>. The incidence of the armed forces in the welfare of a significant number of Americans is evident. In countries such as Ecuador, the existence of a military-industrial complex which provides a significant support to the economy is illusory. What should be done then to contribute towards the development of the country and reduce the burden which the military budget represents for the state? The answer lies precisely in the work which the Ecuadorean Army is embarked upon in order to increase economic self sufficiency, develop new industries, and thus help the social and economic development of the country.

## SECURITY

The country's internal and external security is the fundamental mission which the Political Constitution of Ecuador has assigned to the armed forces of which the Army is a part. In the Latin American area, it may be concluded that Ecuador has

managed successfully to equip her armed forces in accordance with the country's economic realities, without ignoring the balance which must exist between military expenditures and the socioeconomic needs.

In spite of the fact that Ecuador, like the majority of Latin American countries, has been governed by the military, this situation has not been exploited by the armed forces to arm and equip themselves in a disproportionate manner as has been the case with other countries in the area.

The greatest external threat to Ecuador's security is the border dispute with Peru, as well as the militarism and the rate of acquisition of arms of this neighboring country, possibly one of the highest and most dramatic in the area. The journal World Military and Social Expenditures 1991 places Peru twenty-fifth and Ecuador ninety first in a total of 142 countries with respect to their military expenditures based on a percentage of their GNPs.<sup>31</sup> Peru's military expenditure in relation to GNP is the third highest in Latin America.<sup>32</sup>

The importance given to military expenditures in Peru, in comparison to Ecuador, is very great. A comparison of military expenditures in the years 1960 and 1987 shows that Ecuador spent 2.4% of GNP (US\$69 million) and 2.1% of GNP (US\$317 million) respectively; Peru on the other hand spent 2.1% of its GNP

(US\$208 million) and 5.0% (US\$2.184 million) respectively. Taking into account that Peru as well as Ecuador doubled its population in the period 1960 - 1987, the disproportionate increase of its armed forces is obvious. Ecuador increased its expenditure by 42% and Peru by 245%.<sup>33</sup>

The social budget including health and education shows the following figures for Ecuador. From 1.9% of the GNP in 1960, it goes to 3.5% of GNP in 1987, showing an increase in real terms of 0.7%. Health expenditure increased from 0.4% to 1.9%, that is to say an increase in real terms of 1.1%.<sup>34</sup>

In Peru the health and education budget weakens compared with the strengthening of the military expenditure. 2.3% of GNP was invested in education in 1960 and 3.4% of the GNP in 1987 which is equivalent to a reduction in real terms of 0.8%. The health situation is even more critical. From 1.9% of GNP in 1960, the budget was reduced to 0.8%<sup>35</sup> in 1987 which represents, in real terms, a reduction of 1.3%. That is to say that a Peruvian in 1960 had a 30% greater opportunity of receiving education and a 60% greater opportunity of receiving medical attention than in 1987.<sup>36</sup> Could this be one of the reasons for the appearance and strengthening in the last decade of the guerrilla group "Shining Path"?

The greater part of Peru's military purchases between 1969 and 1989 were made in the Soviet Union. Despite comments on maintenance problems, especially related to tanks, Peruvian military power is undeniable. The greater part of Peru's military power is concentrated on the Ecuadorean border. The 1st and the 5th military regions which are located along the Ecuadorean frontier are home to three infantry divisions, one jungle division, one cavalry division, and one armored division.<sup>37</sup> The heavy concentration of troops on the Ecuadorean frontier is also notable.<sup>38</sup> Ecuador has two infantry brigades and two jungle brigades deployed along the border with Peru.<sup>39</sup>

#### THE PERUVIAN AGGRESSION OF 1941

The border dispute between Peru and Ecuador which has been in existence for the last 160 years, deteriorated even more at a moment when Latin American unity was most needed.<sup>40</sup> On 6 July 1941 Peru attacked Ecuadorean military posts along the border, manned by not more than one thousand troops, with a military force composed of 13,000 men which for a long time had been prepared for the invasion of Ecuadorean territory. In a way, the Peruvian attack on Ecuador is similar to that made by Germany on Poland in 1939, when Hitler claimed that the German force composed of tanks and modern military equipment was attacked by mounted riders and foot soldiers of the Polish army. The New

York Times reported the Peru/Ecuador incident in the following manner:

A diplomatic source at Buenos Aires said that the Peruvian version of the outbreak was that Ecuadorean forces had been repulsed in an attempt to cross the border and that they had attacked three Peruvian border posts. This source estimated Peruvian forces along the border as 13,000 against 1,000 Ecuadorean troops.<sup>41</sup>

Ecuador's military inferiority in relation to Peru was very significant. In 1939, 1940, and 1941 Peru purchased military equipment from the United States to the value of US\$2,265,883 and Ecuador's purchases amounted to US\$52,570: a ratio of 43 to 1.<sup>42</sup> Internal political fighting prevented Ecuador from consolidating her territory, which by right belonged to her, to the north of the Amazon River. Only the presence of small military garrisons prevented the Peruvian advance into territories which had never belonged to them. Division General José Gallardo Román makes reference in his article entitled "The Border Problem with Peru and Andean Integration" to the Ecuadorean position prior to the conflict in the following way:

At the end of the 30s, the Peruvian advances could not continue because of the presence of our military garrisons. The Armed Forces government of that country therefore decided to open the way by force and they began a feverish preparation for war. They acquired tanks, aircraft, submarines, destroyers, that is to say the most modern war equipment. Meanwhile, Ecuador found herself involved in fierce fratricidal battles. The triumph of political factions seemed more important, even to the extent of personal ambitions.<sup>43</sup>

The New York Times reporter, Benjamin Welles, who travelled to the war zone between Ecuador and Peru, reported back on his visit in the following way: "Tumbes is a scene of military activity, with Peruvian troops, trucks, motorcycles, horses and mules much in evidence."<sup>44</sup> When referring to his visit to the Ecuadorean troops he states: "At each military post there were requests for letters and newspapers. There is no electricity, no papers, no radio, no books and no comforts for the troops during their year or two years' duty in the wilds."<sup>45</sup>

Peruvian militarism has played and still plays a fundamental part in the political decisions of Peru. When Peruvian aggression against Ecuador took place in 1941, a cease fire between the two countries was achieved under pressure from the United States and under the aegis of the Department of State. The chronology of events makes additional comments unnecessary. In a telegram to the Ministers of Argentina and Brazil, the Department of State proposed a cease fire to be fixed for 6:00 pm on 26 July, based on previous agreement between the Peruvian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alfredo Solf y Muro and the Under Secretary, Sumner Welles, from the Department of State.<sup>46</sup> In the publication Aggression and History the situation in those days is described as follows:

The question is of significance because of the speed with which the messages were sent to the Ecuadorean Army to stop fighting. Orders to the army commanders on the western

front (El Oro) were despatched so quickly that by 9:00 pm on the same day, 26 July, Quito received word from them that they had ordered their troops to end hostilities. However, Peru did not fulfill its commitment to stop hostilities at the time set by the mediators, and it soon appeared that there were two Perus - represented by Solf, the diplomat, and Ureta, the General. Solf violated his promise, first, by temporizing; second, by disappearing for twenty-nine hours; and, third, by demanding new conditions for halting the fighting. If Ureta received any cease fire order from Lima, he disobeyed it, and continued the rapid advance of his forces until 31 July, when Solf's new conditions were satisfied. In his memoirs, Ureta makes no reference to a cease fire on the 26th, and notes only that in accordance with an order from the minister of war, received on July 30, he ordered the cease fire at 6:00 pm on July 31.<sup>47</sup>

With the provinces of El Oro and Loja occupied by the Peruvian Army, taking advantage of the five days of cease fire which only Ecuador complied with, there then took place the III Conference of Foreign Ministers in Rio de Janeiro,<sup>48</sup> the prime objective of which was to seek inter-American unity against the Axis countries with which the United States was at war. At this Conference Ecuador's problem was only dealt with in a peripheral manner. For thirty minutes the Foreign Ministers of Brazil, Argentina, and Ecuador discussed the border dispute between Ecuador and Peru.<sup>49</sup> Finally, on 29 January 1942 Ecuador signed the Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Boundaries,<sup>50</sup> in which she ceded to Peru nearly half of her territory. The greatest injustice in the Americas had been consummated.<sup>51</sup>

The Treaty of Rio de Janeiro did not bring about friendship, peace, or solve the border dispute between the two countries.



Significant cartographic errors impeded the execution of the Treaty. The existence of the River Cenepa in the Cordillera del Condor sector (discovered only at the time of implementation of the Treaty), made it impossible to define the border along almost 78 km of the border. In 1981 this ill-defined border brought the two countries to the brink of war when Peru attacked Ecuadorean military posts located on the eastern slopes of the Cordillera del Cóndor. In the end the two countries withdrew their military forces from the area.<sup>52</sup>

Peruvian militarism will continue to be a considerable threat to Ecuador's external security. Its influence on Peruvian government decisions is very significant. Another example of its scant or non-existent subordination to political power was evident in the second half of 1991, when Peru arbitrarily established a military control post in Ecuadorean territory. After the Ecuadorean Foreign Ministry had made the relevant representations, the Foreign Ministers of the two countries signed a "Gentlemen's Agreement" in which Peru undertook to withdraw the Military Control Post located in Ecuadorean territory.<sup>53</sup> However, history repeated itself: Peru did not honor her word and inserted in the "Gentlemen's Agreement" the request that Ecuador withdraw a Control Post which had been in the area for more than fifteen years. All of these actions are a result of Peruvian militarism which has developed its own line of political and diplomatic thought in Peru. Evidence in support of

this statement is the map of the area of conflict published in the journal Caretas in Lima, in which the frontier line is open to two interpretations in Peru: that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and that of the Ministry of Defense.<sup>54</sup> This explains the resignation of the Peruvian Minister for Foreign Affairs in November 1991.<sup>55</sup>

The 90s offer two prospects relating to the external security of Ecuador. The first is that we continue with the status quo regarding the border with Peru and that military incidents will continue to occur due to the existence of an area in dispute on which Peruvian militarism places its own interpretation. The second is that presidential-level meetings between Ecuador and Peru will allow détente to continue, promoting a future agreement acknowledging Ecuador's rights regarding Amazon sovereignty. Recognition of these rights opens the way for a dignified and lasting peace, benefiting both countries.

#### THREATS TO INTERNAL SECURITY

Ecuador takes pride in being one the least troubled countries in Latin America. She was not affected by the appearance in the area of insurgency groups during the 70s. At present and despite the fact that her neighbors Peru and Colombia are plagued by violent insurgency groups which have caused

thousands of deaths, there are no insurgency groups in Ecuador. A small group called "Alfaro Vive Carajo!" which reached its high point in 1986 is now integrated into the Ecuadorean political system after it was granted political amnesty. Recently, a new insurgent group called "Montoneras Patria Libre" announced its existence and proclaimed the start of its armed fight.<sup>56</sup> The deterioration in social and economic conditions in the less privileged classes could contribute towards the strengthening of this group. However, the Army will need to be prepared within the requirements of the Constitution and the law to fight any group which tries violently to subvert the internal order of the country, and to avoid at all times committing the errors made by other countries in the area, especially with reference to human rights.

The eventual strengthening of the guerrilla group "Shining Path" in Peru could present a threat to Ecuador's internal security, but the adverse feeling which exists in the majority of the population due to the border dispute with Peru will make it reticent to be influenced by this group. Furthermore, the fact that there is no Indian population on the border with Peru provides an optimistic outlook which should be strengthened by improving the living conditions of the Indians and their integration into society to avoid incitement by groups interested in disturbing internal peace, very often to their own ends.

Compulsory military service, for all sectors of society, will provide an issue which should be discussed by political and military leaders in Ecuador. For a developing country such as Ecuador, participation by the young in activities to support development and to contribute to its security will always be welcome. In an article written by a well known Ecuadorean politician entitled "Everyone to the Barracks" he comments:

I insist: a period of military life is good for every young person. Their parents should not be afraid: the barracks are no longer the centers of brutality which they used to be, their sons will not die nor be deformed. To the contrary, they will return stronger, better formed and more prepared to face life.<sup>57</sup>

It is important to bear in mind that the Ecuadorean people have a very favorable opinion of their Armed Forces. Recent opinion polls placed the Army in second place, after the Church, as the most respected institution in the country.<sup>58</sup> The fact that the Army devotes much of its time to specific societal functions has been, and continues to be, a key reason for the population to hold this opinion.

Despite the fact that Ecuador is not a drug producing country, its close proximity to Peru and Colombia makes it a transit post for trafficking. At present, the Army supports the Police in the fight against drug trafficking with training and

air transport. The drug problem could become a threat to internal security.

Another threat to internal security which the Army is beginning to take account of is the deterioration of the environment. Military units located in the Amazon regions carry out daily checks to minimize environmental destruction. The future will require the Army to take a more active part, in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, to preserve the environment. Military educational institutions now place emphasis on a knowledge of subjects related to conservationism.

The Army's support in favor of democracy has been decisive in achieving its strengthening since the last democratic period began in 1979. Next May, Ecuador will hold its fourth presidential election - nearly a record in the region - in which again the control and guarantee of security will be provided by the Armed Forces, and particularly by the Army. In difficult moments of internal unrest, the Armed Forces' commitment to uphold democracy will be of paramount importance for its continuity.

## CONCLUSIONS

The threats to the external security of the country which the Army will have to face in the remaining years of this decade

could be colored by both optimism and frustration. A dignified outcome to the dispute with Peru in which the Amazon rights of the country are recognized will leave the people satisfied and the Armed Forces ready to participate in a more active way in the development of the country, leaving aside the purchase of arms which is so onerous for the national economy. However, the need to maintain an equipped army and reserve ready for the national defense within a deterrent framework against any external threat should be better understood by those in successive governments.

The continuation of the status quo in the border dispute with Peru will surely demand the acquisition of new arms and modernization of existing armament, not for the purpose of seeking a conflict with Peru, but to be prepared to face what history on three occasions (1941, 1981, 1991) has taught Ecuador. Peruvian militarism is not necessarily subordinate to political power, and Peruvian military actions in the disputed border region are unpredictable. Furthermore, the absence of a worthy solution to the border dispute will make peace and integration elusive in the region.

Hopefully, Ecuadorean politicians will become increasingly conscious that a nation which does not learn from history is condemned to repeat its errors. The past has proven that national defense issues should be considered outside party politics. The mistakes made by those governing the country in the years prior

to the Peruvian aggression in 1941 must not be repeated. The armed forces must not be weakened to levels which place the survival of the Ecuadorean state in jeopardy.

The participation of the Army in future development will be broadened. This will require officer training in areas other than administration, educational sciences, and engineering, at present included in their curriculum. Officers may in the future attend universities in the same way as is expected of their counterparts in the developed world. This will increase the academic training of the future officer and at the same time will allow him to draw closer to the civilian population, opening the way for issues such as security and national defense to be debated and taught in the universities.

The Ecuadorean Army will take an increasing part in the peace-keeping forces in the different conflicts which occur around the world. Finally, the support and strengthening of democracy will be accompanied by greater professionalism and by the conviction that this is the form of government which genuinely will improve the Ecuadorean society. However, there will be no lack of factors threatening the institution, and internal difficulties in the country which will place the Army on the alert. It is to be hoped, however, that a sufficiently mature civilian population will develop the solutions to problems which are always to be found in a young democracy and which

require the faith of all Ecuadoreans, regardless of whether or not they wear a uniform.



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